

REMARKS

By the present Amendment, minor editorial revisions have been made in the specification, such as the correction of formula (I) to include W_3 . A corresponding revision of formula (I) has been made in the claims by replacing claim 2 with claim 10 and adjusting the dependency of claims 3 and 4. In addition, the Abstract has been revised so that it is in single paragraph format and more in line with U.S. practice. Finally, claim 11 has been added to define a further aspect of the present invention that is supported by the specification such as on page 74, first paragraph.

The substance of the original claims has not been changed since applicants respectfully submit that the various aspects of the present invention are neither anticipated nor suggested by the cited prior art. Prior to addressing the rejection set forth in the Official Action, applicants believe that a discussion of the present invention and the advantages which may be obtained therefrom are in order. As set forth in claim 1, one aspect of the present invention relates to an ink comprising a water-soluble phthalocyanine compound wherein in the spectral absorption curve of an aqueous solution of the phthalocyanine compound, the absorbance ratio b/a of the maximum absorbance b in the absorption band of 660 to 680 nm and a maximum absorbance a in the absorption band of 600 to 640 nm is less than 0.8. The claim further recites that the counter ion for the ionic hydrophilic group of the phthalocyanine compound is lithium ion. As noted above, independent claim 2 has been re-written as claim 10 to address a minor error in the formula and relates to an ink comprising a water-soluble phthalocyanine compound that is represented by formula (I). In this formula, it will be noted that the definitions recite that at least one of W_1 , W_2 , W_3 and W_4 is an ionic hydrophilic group by itself or has an ionic

hydrophilic group as substituent, provided that the counter ion for the ionic hydrophilic group is lithium ion. Illustrative hydrophilic groups with lithium as the counter ion are illustrated in the various Tables starting on page 77 of the specification and a specific formula is illustrated on page 117.¹

The present invention with the specifically defined lithium counter ion provides substantial advantages. As may be seen from the results provided in Table 21 on page 123 of the specification, by utilizing a lithium counter ion rather than sodium, potassium or ammonium as the counter ion, sufficiently high solubility in methanol can be attained. Furthermore, as shown in Table 22 on page 131, the so-called bronze phenomenon described on page 130 can be avoided compared to similar phthalocyanine compounds which use a sodium, potassium or ammonium as the counter ion. Thus, those of ordinary skill in the art will understand that in accordance with the teachings of the present invention, one can obtain substantial advantages over compounds which do not contain a lithium counter ion.

Turning to the prior art cited in the Official Action, neither Yamasaki, U.S. Patent No. 5,739,319, nor Carr, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0011396 describes or suggests a phthalocyanine compound as recited in the claims of record including an ionic hydrophilic group having lithium ion as the counter ion. Yamasaki does not appear to mention lithium and Carr only refers to lithium in paragraph [0030] with respect to certain salts of formula (1) but without regard to an ionic hydrophilic group that is specifically recited in the claims of record. Moreover, this isolated paragraph in Carr does not distinguish lithium from sodium, potassium and ammonium salts and the document does not in any way recognize the

¹ Other aspects of the present invention are set forth in the other pending claims.

advantageous results which can be obtained from the present invention that have been illustrated in the specification. Thus, the cited prior art cannot be used in any way to reject the claims of record.

Based on the foregoing discussion, applicants respectfully submit that the cited prior art does not anticipate or make obvious the various aspects of the present invention and therefore requests reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

Should the Examiner wish to discuss any aspect of the present application, he is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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